



December 2005

Greetings,

I can hardly believe it's December already! November was another hectic month for "Operation: Allied Against Meth" as we beefed up our education efforts, continued working to build tribal partnerships and got busy on the final recommendations of the Meth Task Force.

Building Tribal Partnerships

Director of Community Relations and Outreach Luke Esser and I recently visited the Lummi Nation. We were graciously welcomed by Chairman Darrell Hillaire, the rest of the tribal council, chief of police and other tribal department heads. We learned that one of their most important issues is drug abuse involving oxycontin and methamphetamine.

The tribal council members told us about their CMAD (Community Mobilization Against Drugs and Alcohol) program and how they are dealing with drug abuse and drug endangered children. The meeting was a great sharing of ideas, and we're looking forward to collaborating with the Lummi Nation wherever possible to stop drug abuse in their community.

TASK FORCE

Our "Operation: Allied Against Meth" Task Force met for the final time on November 9. The heads of the task force's three individual work groups shared the final recommendations of their subcommittees, which did an outstanding job covering criminal sanctions, demand reduction, drug treatment and clean-up. The three groups made roughly 50 recommendations on issues that impact drug endangered children, law enforcement, social services and our communities.

A package for the 2006 Legislature is now being developed. Thanks to every member of the Task Force, in the very near future we'll have some excellent new meth fighting tools and strategies in the works.

EDUCATION

We've had some fantastic educational events over the past few weeks, again teaming with our non-profit partner, Lead On America, to give anti-methamphetamine presentations to schools around Washington.

I'm extremely pleased to report that our meth education message reached approximately 1,600 more students in November. Early last month, we visited Lewis and Clark High School in downtown Spokane. (Lewis and Clark has twice made Newsweek's annual top schools list, mostly recently last year.) Spokane is an outstanding model for community meth prevention efforts, and the impact of their work really shows in the positive and concerned attitudes of their students.

Last week, we visited Horizon and Vista Middle Schools and Ferndale High School. As usual, everyone was very excited to receive the "Don't Meth Around" wrist bands we handed out after the programs. These bands are a great reminder to the students and those who see the students wearing them of the devastating effects of meth use on individuals, families, schools and communities.

In Ferndale, we added an evening program with Lead On America and STAR, the Whatcom County Meth Action Team, for parents, leaders and community members. We had a good turn out, including Whatcom County Sheriff Bill Elfo, Representative Doug Ericksen, Special Agent Keith Knealey from the DEA, Officer David Shepard from the Ferndale Police Department, Councilwoman Candice Wilson-Lane from the Lummi Nation, parents, teachers and students. Ferndale and Whatcom County are seriously committed to partnering with us to eradicate the meth problem in their area.

More Community Outreach

Last month, I spoke to the Port Angeles Kiwanis about "Operation: Allied Against Meth". I also gave a presentation to the Spokane Rotary on the cost of methamphetamine to the criminal justice system. Both well attended events were excellent opportunities to continue spreading the word about meth to community leaders in our state.

It has been an honor to meet, work with and learn from everyone involved in this effort. I look forward to our continued partnerships and I'm committed to continuing all "Operation: Allied Against Meth" activities throughout 2006.

Best wishes to you and your families for a wonderful holiday season!

Sincerely,

Rob McKenna
Attorney General